

Study: Gene promotes manic-depression

Scientists say discovery of flawed gene could help treat those with bipolar disorder.

By MALCOLM RITTER
The Associated Press

Scientists say they've identified a flawed gene that appears to promote manic-depression, or bipolar disorder, a finding that could eventually help guide scientists to new treatments.

A particular variant of the gene was associated with only about 3 percent of cases in a study, but researchers said other variants might be involved with more.

Follow-up research might help reveal the mysterious underlying biology that makes some people susceptible to the disorder, and so help scientists devise new treatments, said the study's senior author, Dr. John Kelsoe of the University of California, San Diego.

The work is reported in today's issue of the journal *Molecular Psychiatry*.

Previous studies have suggested that other genes are involved in manic-depression. But one expert, Dr. Melvin McNis of Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, said in an interview that he thinks Kelsoe's new work and another recent study provide the strongest evidence for involvement of particular genes in the disease.

Manic-depression, which affects about 2.3 million American adults, involves episodes of depression and mania, states of abnormally high mood or irritability.

While effective treatment is available, scientists would like to find better medications.

Genetics clearly play a role. Kelsoe's work focused on a gene called GRK3, which influences the brain's sensitivity to chemi-

cal messages brain cells send each other.

Defects in the gene might promote manic-depression by making people oversensitive to these messages, which are carried by dopamine and other substances, he said.

Kelsoe and colleagues found statistical evidence tying a particular variant of the GRK3 gene to the disease. They tracked the inheritance of this variant from parent to child in families with a history of bipo-

lar disorder. Overall, the variant was passed along more often than one would expect by chance to a child who later developed the disease.

That suggests the variant promotes susceptibility to bipolar disorder.

The association between the variant gene and the disorder appeared in one group of 153 families and a second group of 275 families.

That association is only statistical, and Kelsoe said researchers now are looking for biological evidence that this variant of the gene acts

On the Web
◆ National Institute of Mental Health: www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/bipolarmenu.cfm

abnormally.

In any case, Kelsoe said other investigators will need to confirm his study's finding in other families to build the case that GRK3 is truly related to manic-depression.

"It's likely only one of many genes involved in the disease," Kelsoe said. "Who knows how many such genes there are? It's likely in the dozens."



U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY REGION II INVITES PUBLIC COMMENT

Proposed Cleanup for the
Cornell-Dubiller Electronics Superfund Site
South Plainfield, Middlesex County, New Jersey

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announces the opening of a 30-day public comment period on the Proposed Plan and Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS), which addresses the cleanup of contaminated soil at properties in the vicinity of the Cornell-Dubiller Electronics (CDE) facility in South Plainfield, Middlesex County, New Jersey. As part of the public comment period, EPA will hold a public meeting on June 23, 2003, at 7:00 p.m., in the South Plainfield Borough Hall located at 2480 Plainfield Avenue, South Plainfield, New Jersey. The meeting, which will address the proposed cleanup plan, will allow community members to comment on the proposed plan to EPA officials. A final copy of the RI/FS for residential, commercial, and municipal properties in the vicinity of the CDE facility and Proposed Plan may be reviewed at the South Plainfield Public Library, 2484 Plainfield Avenue, South Plainfield, New Jersey, and at the EPA Region II Records Center located at 290 Broadway, 18th Floor in New York City.

As the lead agency, EPA divided the site into three Operable Units (OUs). The first OU addresses residential, commercial, and municipal properties in the vicinity of the CDE facility. The second operable unit (OU2) will address the remediation of soils and buildings at the former CDE facility on Hamilton Boulevard. The third and final operable unit (OU3) will address the contaminated groundwater and contaminated sediments at the Bound Brook.

Based upon the results of the first Operable Unit RI/FS, EPA prepared a Proposed Plan that describes all the cleanup alternatives and provides EPA's rationale for recommending a single alternative. EPA evaluated the following three alternatives:

- Alternative 1: No Action
- Alternative 2: Limited Action; Engineering and Institutional Controls
- Alternative 3: Excavation; Off-Site Disposal with Treatment

EPA recommends Alternative 3: Excavation; Off-Site Disposal with Treatment for the Preferred Alternative in the Proposed Plan.

Before selecting a final remedy, EPA and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection will consider all written and oral comments on this preferred remedy. All comments must be received on or before July 16, 2003. The final decision document, or Record of Decision, will include a summary of public comments and EPA's responses.

Comments will be accepted in person at the public meeting and/or in written form through July 16, 2003. Please address all written comments to:

Peter Mannino
Remedial Project Manager
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
290 Broadway, 19th Floor
New York, New York 10007-1866

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